Quarterly Magazine of the McHenry County Historical Society & Museum

Tracer

We engage and educate current and future generations by preserving and sharing McHenry County History 2022 Issue #4

Juno's Maiden Voyage

and Queen Anne Prairie's Norwegian Settlement

By KURT PEARSON

Prospect of Bergen, Norway, showing the inlet Vågen from where the bark Juno departed for America in May 1843.

In the spring of 1843 when Captain Niels Bendixen traveled inland to the Norwegian countryside to gauge interest in *Juno's* maiden voyage to America, there was a sudden little flurry of marriages in Voss parish.

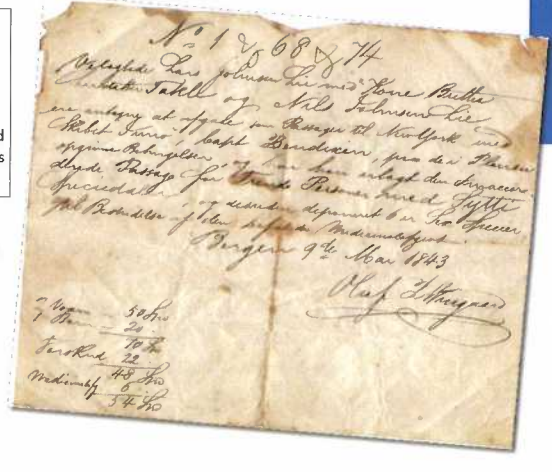
(at left, a traditional bridal dress and bridal crown from Voss parish in Hordaland County, Norway. Hand-painted photograph by Marcus Selmer, 1863)

Normally, banns were read in the local church three consecutive Sundays before a couple was married. In this case, tradition was brushed aside so a few of the betrothed would be married in time for the Juno's May 11 departure.

Lars Johnsen Lie and Britha Larsdatter Takle, whose ticket for the *Juno* (pictured & detailed at right); and future residents of Queen Anne Prairie, Mikkjel Tolliefson Brÿn and Guro Andersdatter Flògo, had their banns read April 16 and then twice on April 17. They were married the following week on April 26, so they could travel to Bergen before the *Juno* left port.

Captain Bendixen, a Bergen native, was criticized that April in the Bergen newspaper *Bergens Stiftstidende* by Bishop Jacob Nuemann for his "recruiting" efforts. Bendixen responded that he traveled to Voss after a farmer urged him to arrange passage for some 50 or so persons after they received favorable "America letters" and were now very interested in immigrating to America. The bishop from Bergen had cause for concern. Between March 13 and May 4, 1843, alone, more than 125 people left Voss parish for America. More than 70 of them would be on Capt. Bendixen's *Juno*.

The Norwegian bark Juno was built by Herman Gran at Laksevaag's Wharf near Bergen in 1842 and owned by Adam W. Müller. This drawing is from *Johs. B. Thue's Bergen og sjøfarten II, 1800-1860; skipsfart og kjøpmannsskap», Sjøfartshistorisk Årbok. 1979.*



The receipt at left, below, for all intents and purposes, a one-way ticket for three to New York for the newlyweds Larvvs and Britha and Lars's 12-year-old brother Nils. The ticket reads:

"Well-regarded Lars Johnsen Lie with wife Britha Larsdatter Takle and Nils Johnsen Lie are accepted to depart as passengers to New York with the ship Juno, Capt. Bendixen, on the conditions in the plan, and he has paid the passage for three persons with 70 speciedaler, and in addition deposited 6 or six speciedaler for the discharge of the approved medicine fee.

Bergen May 9, 1843"

The bark *Juno* was built by Herman Gran at Laksevaag's Wharf near Bergen in 1842 and owned by Adam W. Müller. Tickets for the transatlantic journey cost 25 *speciedalers* (*spd*) per adult and 20 *spd* per child. In the 1840s, the Juno was considered the most

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The Tracer is our quarterly publication which includes local history stories, news and information. It's been a direct benefit to all our members since 1974.

Our museum is located between Routes 20 and 176, at 6422 Main Street in Union, Illinois

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OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

We engage and educate current and future generations by preserving and sharing McHenry County history.

(An Illinois Not-for-profit 501c3 Corporation)

We appreciate all of our members and invite *you* to join if you haven't yet.

Many local history opportunities are available.

We look forward to your inquiry.

President's Column

From the desk of Karen Parks

Fall has come and gone once again. We've also now emerged from what generations of writers, poets and philosophers have referred to as the most wonderful time of the year.

You doubtlessly are aware that I am referring to the very special holidays of Thanksgiving, Christmas and Hanukah. I hope you were able to participate in this special season – a time that fills each and every one of us with love and light. It is a time we dearly cherish.

Upon reflection, you may find there are numerous memories of past celebrations that fill us with joy. Perhaps, in our mind's eye, we see an object ... or grandparents, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters ... or other relatives long gone but with us in spirit. Those memories may be bittersweet, but they are a prized possession that we treasure and would never part with willingly.

Karen Parks

And whether we realize it or not, we are well on our way toward building a set of memories for our own children and grandchildren; memories of this special time, memories of the warmth and security of a family together, memories of love, memories that will stand up to the ravages of time.

Please understand that from these special moments we have all received a golden legacy which is ours to pass down to our children, grandchildren, and their children yet to come in the hope that they learn from our mistakes. That is why the McHenry County Historical Society is here: to help us – and them – understand the past.

Please enjoy this latest Tracer and check out our website at GotHistory.org for information about all of the things we are doing. My wish, as president, is that we will continue to educate our citizens about the importance of preserving our county history for future generations.

We'd like you to know we've been implementing a new system called Neon to help staff and board to manage our people relationships; valued donors, members and volunteers in particular. You'll continue to see changes in the ways we contact you and share news.

Also, one of our long-standing board members, Don Rose, has once again taken on pulling each issue of the Tracer together. He took over for Ann Bormett in mid-2009 and handled the task for three years. Now, ten years later, he's diving back to Adobe InDesign, so this issue took a bit longer than he'd hoped. Kurt continues to gather and edit our content. We would like to sincerly thank Nancy Humphrey Haskins who did an excellent job through our last issue. Don is now also our institutional archivist, working to protect the history of our own organization since our founding in 1963 and still keeps us up-to-date with technology. ❧

Please know that the support you provide MCHS – be it with your money, time and/or as an ambassador for the organization – is deeply appreciated and that the dividends will be realized for years to come.

~ Karen

Turkey Time in Bull Valley

BY KIMBERLY A. MACE

Did you buy your Thanksgiving turkey from a local grocery? If you had lived in the McHenry/Bull Valley area in the 1930s-50s, you could have purchased a premium-quality turkey from the Schmelzer family farm.

Customers could buy fresh dressed birds (organs removed) weighing between 16 and 22 pounds or get them live. Also available were capons – young, castrated male chickens – supposedly very tender; considered a luxury.

Customers could place orders either by telephone or by sending a penny postcard to the farm, according to newspaper ads. Long before Door Dash and other fast food delivery options of today, the Schmelzers would deliver the turkey to your door on a Saturday!

Sue Dietz of Harvard Eggs, Feed & Produce said the family business currently sells 40 to 45 turkeys a year – raised from poults they order each year from Beaver Dam, Wis. The birds are kept mostly in the barn, safe from racoons and other predators. She said it takes about four months to raise a turkey to an adequate size for sale.

Kauffman Turkey Farms in Waterman, which claims to be the largest in the state, produces about 70,000 turkeys a year – fed on a diet of corn and soybean meal, supplemented by protein sources such as fish meal. Hens and Toms are dressed at about 16 and 19 weeks old, respectively. Illinois farmers produce close to 3 million turkeys a year.

The Schmelzer farm, located at 7811 Bull Valley Road, still exists … albeit under different ownership. **The three vintage photos accompanying this article are courtesy of Karen Schmalzier Jepson, a grandchild who lived on the farm**.

In the 1872 McHenry County plat book, it is listed as 40 acres in Section 6 of Nunda Township. At that time, it was owned by Fairlie Terwilliger, and his wife, Eliza Brown Terwilliger. The Terwilligers had three daughters: Nellie, Zora, and Abigail. At one point, mother-in- law Marion Brown and possibly sister-in-law Octavia Brown lived at the farm, too.

It appears that in 1882, Terwilliger sold the farm to Franklin and Caroline Brown. Franklin may have been a brother or cousin of his wife. The Browns owned the farm until 1901, when they sold it Magnus Carlson. Carlson, in turn, sold it to Clarence & Louisa Apgar in 1910. They only owned the farm for about one year, then sold it in March 1911 and moved back to Chicago, according to newspaper accounts. Perhaps country life wasn't to their liking?

John Pfannenstill owned the farm for about two years, from 1911 to 1913. Charles and Sophia Schmelzer bought the farm in 1913. Charles was born in 1867 in what is now Germany. He came to the U.S. as an infant or small child, possibly between 1867-1872. He lived in Chicago, and was a member of the Chicago Fire Department. When the department switched from horse-drawn wagons to motorized fire trucks, Charles Schmelzer decided to retire. He moved out to the farm in 1913. At that time the area was considered West McHenry.

Charles and Sophia had five children: Helen, Karl, Marguerite, Edwin and Albert. They raised their family in the farmhouse which had three to four bedrooms. Later, the front porch was enclosed and bathrooms were added. Eventually, a small home was built for Edwin or Albert's family just southeast of the main house. This was known later as a guest cottage.

Charles granted use of his land along the south side of the road the farm was located on to the Chicago Telephone Co. in October 1915. This was probably so Chicago Telephone (which became Illinois Bell in 1920) could string telephone lines from McHenry into the farms of Bull Valley. At this time the farm was primarily known as a dairy farm.

The May 1930 federal census showed that Charles still was involved in general farming with his wife, Sophie, and sons – Edwin, 27, and Albert, 25. The young men hired themselves out as odd-job laborers, as well as –presumably – working the

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family farm. By the 1930s the farm had expanded to raising chickens. A McHenry Plaindealer newspaper article from March 1933 stated that Charles and Sophie had been involved in an auto accident on their way to Chicago to deliver eggs.

By the 1940 census Edwin had married Cora Larsen of Woodstock. The couple and their children, Donna and Karen, lived at the farm. He worked as a feed buyer and grinder. Albert married too, and he and his wife also had two children. Albert worked as a polisher at the Alemite Die Cast Factory (former Oliver Typewriter Company) in Woodstock. Edwin paid his parents $10 rent each month and Albert paid $20 monthly!!

Sometime between 1942 and 1950, the farm's address changed. For many years known as Route 1, it then became known as Bull Valley Road. The road was still gravel until 1946 when it was then changed to an asphalt/blacktop type surface. In the late 1940's the phone system was probably still a "party line," as the farm's phone number was 613-R1.

It appears that the Schmelzers began raising turkeys in the 1940s. Various ads in the McHenry Plaindealer listed their

prices for turkeys into the early 1950s. Charles, Sophie, Edwin, Albert and their families still lived together on the farm. Edwin now had three children (son, Robert) and worked at the Terra Cotta Pottery Factory (now TC Industries on Route 31 in Crystal Lake.) Albert and his wife, Rubie, still had two children – a daughter, Pat, and son, William. He worked as a punch press operator making wholesale furniture.

Evidently, neither Edwin nor Albert wanted to be full-time farmers. But they liked the togetherness of three generations on the farm. In 1952 Edwin's son, Robert, won blue ribbons for his Broad Breasted Bronze Turkeys. These are one of the largest turkey breeds, ideal for their amount of meat. They are able to fly and are excellent foragers who like to range. A Plaindealer newspaper photo taken in November 1953, shows a young boy, Lonnie M. Opalka of McCullom Lake, with one of the turkeys. It was destined to be a star attraction at a Thanksgiving dinner.

Charles Schmelzer, patriarch of the family, fell in his home and was taken to Memorial Hospital in Woodstock (on South Street next to Woodstock High School, now demolished.) He died Jan. 4, 1955, at the age of about 88 years. His widow, Sophia, only lived for 11 more months, dying Dec. 11, 1955, in Berlin, Wis. She'd been living with her son, Albert, in Pine River, Wis.

Modern photo of the farmhouse by Kimberly A. Mace, author of this article.

The farm was then run by son. Edwin Schmelzer, and his wife Cora. At some point it was reduced from about 40 acres down to five. Later, Cora was widowed, and the farm went into a trust at the State Bank of Woodstock from May 1977 until December 1996. It was purchased by Leroy and Sharon Madsen, who renamed it Twin Pines Farm. The Madsens owned it for about nine years, selling it in Nov 2017 to the current owner who recently fenced in pastureland along the road for horses.

John Burk, regional biologist with the Wild Turkey Federation, said domestic birds are physically different than their "tightly wound" wild brethren. He attributed it to a combination of genetic selection and learned behavior.

While McHenry County residents may be seeing more wild turkeys, Burk said, the population actually has declined about 18 percent across Illinois since its high-water mark in the early 2000s. He singled out weather patterns and habitat loss as the main culprits. Since wild turkeys nest on the ground, he said, wetter than typical conditions in the spring can be deadly for young birds. Also, nearly half the number of acres since the 1990s are enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program – which pays farmers to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production.

Finally, Burk noted that broadleaf, full-spectrum pesticides – some of which are genetically engineered into seed – have had a devastating effect on the insect populations that wild turkeys rely on.

"How many times lately have you had to pull off the road and clean your windshield off?" he said.

As for the Schmelzer farm, the old barn remains behind the house. The silo has been reduced to about one half its original height. The chicken house and grain bin, southwest of the barn, are no longer there. The original driveway into the farm was just west of the house. There was a root cellar built into the side of a hill and located just west of the driveway. It was used to store potatoes in the winter. It's still there, but very dilapidated. The current 5 acres spans about 650 feet along the southern edge of Bull Valley Road.

I drive past this farm almost weekly. I've often seen a flock of between eight and 20 turkeys on land to the east of the farm and crossing the road in that vicinity. Could any descendants of those who once lived at the Schmelzer Farm? More likely, they're just another group of turkeys trying to avoid becoming someone's Thanksgiving dinner!

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rapid sailer on the Atlantic. The 96 Norwegian passengers, age 6 months to 60 years, who boarded the bark in Bergen harbor on May 11, 1843, were sailing to New York.

A letter written on May 15 by one of the passengers aboard ship, Styrk Eriksen Lødve, to his brothers and sisters already in America informed them of the *Juno's* famous passenger: "I must also tell thee that Cleng Peerson is going with us to America, and he says he has been there for 22 years. In addition, he adds that he is well-acquainted with my brothers and many other Norwegian people."

Cleng Peersen is referred to by many as the "Father of Norwegian Emigration." He had already been to America at least four times before and had a residence in Lee County in southeastern Iowa. When Cleng returned to Norway in 1842 to visit family and tell about the prospects of life in America, interest in Norwegian emigration grew exponentially. Bishop Neumann's ire had also fallen upon Cleng in the Bergen newspaper in April 1843, saying he "wanders among his countrymen as a Mephistopheles who under a mask of humaneness and sympathy, has hidden his cloven hoof" persuading people to leave for America when the prospects were not clear.

The *Juno's* journey west had a bit of a rocky start. According to the letter by Styrk Eriksen Lødve, the Juno did not leave Bergen on time. "We left Bergen May 13 and sailed five miles from Bergen. However, on the 14th we had to sail 4 miles back again, because we met a headwind and we were blown so far back that we could look into Sandvika [a neighborhood in northern Bergen] again. But the 15th of May we went a different course, in order to have the wind more with us and that day we had both wind and rain."

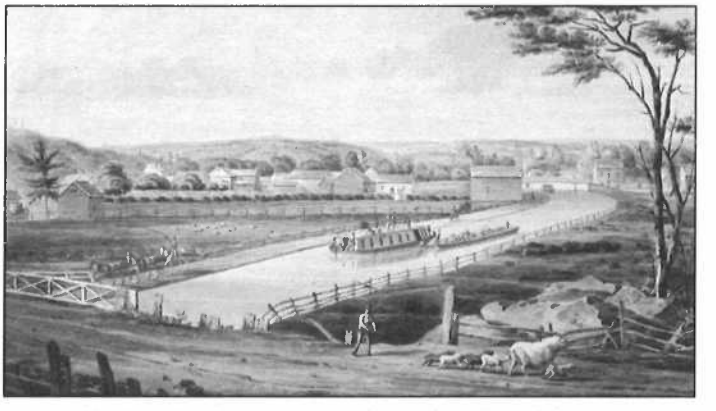
It was a bad omen for a journey which would be laden with suffering, illness and death. It did not take long before many on board fell ill with vomiting seasickness. However, after a 64-day journey, the Juno finally reached New York City on July 14. Four passengers were sent immediately to a hospital.

In 1843 no immigration process existed in the United States. The first immigration station in the United States, Castle Garden, would not open on the southern tip of Manhattan for another 12 years. Ellis Island, the first federal immigration station, would not open for almost another 50 years. So the passengers at that earlier time would normally have been on their own or be required to enlist a guide. Thanks to the good fortune of having Cleng Peerson with the group heading to the Midwest, the trip would be significantly easier with him as guide.

Also, another person from the Midwest had traveled east from Chicago to New York to assist in guiding the group at least as far as Illinois. Andrew Larsen Flage (below, left) immigrated to America four years earlier with his second wife and now operated a garden truck farm on Chicago canal land. He came to New York to greet daughter, Guro Andersdatter Flògo, new son-in-law, Mikkjel T. Brÿn, and another daughter, Anna Andersdatter Flògo, whose future husband also was aboard the *Juno*.

The trip to Chicago was complicated and not without its dangers. Steamboat travel up the Hudson River to Albany had been available since 1807 and the Erie Canal, which connected the 363 miles from Albany to Lake Erie at Buffalo, had been completed in 1825. A packet boat that could accommodate the whole party who had emigrated on the *Juno*, had the right-of-way before the freight boats on the canals and the trip would take between four to six days. In fair weather, a number of the passengers would sit on the roof of the canal boat, which was pulled between locks by horses.

On this leg of the journey, four more in the Norwegian party fell ill. Another passenger, 50-year-old Anders Nielsen Grove, was injured. As the "*Erie Canal Song*" advises in its chorus, "Low bridge, everybody down!/ Low bridge 'cause we're coming to a town." It was necessary for the passengers who were sitting on top of the boat to either lie flat or get off the roof as the boat approached towns where a bridge was crossing overhead



to avoid being struck. Unfortunately, Anders "was lying next to an anchor that was caught by a beam and rolled over his chest." (Kotlarchik, *Our Norwegian Ancestors of the Fox River Settlement* p. 137).

When the party arrived in Buffalo, they boarded a steamboat to cross the Great Lakes. Shortly after boarding, unfortunately, a passenger died. The youngest child of Lars Peterson Spilde and Ingeborg Larsdatter Spilde, who were coming directly to Greenwood Township in McHenry County, succumbed to the arduous journey. Anne Larsdatter Spilde was only 15 months old. The family went ashore to bury her the following day.

The steamship arrived August 1 in Chicago. Not all passengers went the same way. Some stayed in Chicago; others dispersed to Norwegian settlements farther afield. Our interest is in those who would settle in McHenry County on what is called Queen Anne Prairie today.

Planting roots in McHenry County

Lars Peterson Spilde, **Ingebjørg Larsdatter Spilde** and family made it to McHenry County on Aug. 28 and became known as Lars and Isabel Peterson. Three of their four children made it to Queen Anne Prairie where Lars purchased 80 acres in Section 20 of Greenwood Township from the U.S. government before the year was out. They farmed in the area for the rest of their lives and then their son, Lewis L. Peterson, took over their farm. Their son, Peter, who was 7 when the family emigrated, died at the age of 24 in a tragic farming

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accident when a cylinder thrashing machine exploded. Their daughter, Betsey L. Peterson, died a year after she was married. Lars died in 1865 and was buried in Scandinavian Cemetery.

Steffen Tolleifsen Brÿn (S. T. Bryan) and his wife, **Britha Larsdatter Istad**, (Betsey L. Bryan, who was a half-sister to Lars Peterson's wife Isabel) and their son, **Tollef** (Thomas Steffensen Bryan) may have stayed in Chicago briefly, but by 1847 Steffen had started purchasing land on what is today Queen Anne Prairie in Greenwood Township in McHenry County. On August 7 he purchased land in Section 20 and was quite a successful farmer. On April 3, 1850, Steffen and Betsey arranged for part of their land to be used to build the Norwegian Evangelical Church of Greenwood. The church, built opposite their farmhouse on what is today Charles Road, "was commenced and nearly finished" by Steffen (*History of McHenry County*, p. 679). Regular services were, of course, conducted in Norwegian.

Betsey L. Bryan died in the early 1850s in the cholera epidemic that swept through many of the Norwegian settlements. S. T. Bryan would marry three times; his second wife, Anna Aadsdatter Bryan, is buried in Scandinavian Cemetery.

Kristi Tollevsdatter Vike, Steffen T. Bryan's sister, and her husband, **Sjur Iversen Vike**, and their son, **Iver Sjursen Vike**, who was not yet 2 years old, settled in the Norwegian settlement at Muskego, Wis. Unfortunately, Sjur died within the first year. Christi Iverson and her son, Iver, moved to Illinois and Queen Anne Prairie where three of her brothers lived. She married Norwegian emigrant and Voss native, Goodsell Halleson. Iver was educated in Greenwood Township, found work farming (1870) and brick making (1880) and later with the Oliver Typewriting Company in Woodstock. Christi, Iver, her second husband Goodsell and most of their children are buried in Scandinavian Cemetery.

Mikkjel Tolleifsen Brÿn (Michael T. Bryan), Steffen T. Bryan and Christi Halleson's brother, and his wife, **Guro Andersdatter Flògo** (Julia A. Flage), married less than three weeks before the Juno departed. They first lived in Chicago, but by 1847 they had settled in Queen Anne Prairie where they farmed successfully for many years. In 1859, Bryan sold a 10-acre tract of farmland to the west of Woodstock in Dorr Township which became Oakland Cemetery. They, themselves, are both buried in Scandanavian Cemetery.

Another brother, **Niels Tolleifson Brÿn** (Nelson T. Bryan), also became a successful farmer on Queen Anne Prairie. He bought land in 1847 from Erick Knutson in Section 20, where the present farm at 12410 Charles Road is located today, just west from his brother, Steffen. However, soon news that gold was discovered in California reached Queen Anne Prairie and the call proved too much to resist. Nelson, still a bachelor, is found on the 1850 census mining in Illinois Canyon, El Dorado County, less than 10 miles northwest of Sutter's Mill where gold was first discovered in January 1848. How successful Nelson was mining gold is difficult to decipher at this point in time, although the census showed he owned $600 worth of real estate at the time. He returned to Illinois around 1852, continued farming, and married a Norwegian emigrant, Britha "Betsey" G. Boe, who had arrived from her native Voss in 1853. After their marriage, the couple successfully farmed their 80 acres in Section 20 of Greenwood Township and quickly started a family, having a total of eight children.

Nelson was elected tax collector for Greenwood Township for at least two consecutive terms, being re-elected in April 1871 by one vote. A story in the *Woodstock Sentinel* from April 6, 1871, states: "The collector, N. T. Bryan, defeated his opponent by barely one majority, and this only by a mere scratch. It appears that in counting the votes the judges found two ballots folded together, apparently by accident. By throwing these out the candidates for collector would tie. After consulting the law, and before it was known for whom the double ballot was cast, it was agreed to allow the ballot to be counted, and it was found to have been cast for N. T. Bryan. And what is stranger than all, on referring to the poll list and the number on the ballot, it was ascertained that it was cast by N. T. Bryan, he thus electing himself by one majority."

Nelson was also one of the directors for the *McHenry County Bible Society* in 1873. Unfortunately that year great tragedy struck the family. On March 5, Betsey died at the age of 37. Burial was at *Scandinavian Cemetery* in Lot 45. Nelson was left to raise six surviving children.

Nelson was considered a "well-to-do farmer" and in 1874, when Woodstock was starting up its first pickling and canning works, he was one of the farmers who sold stock subscriptions for the works. But tragedy was not through with the family. On the evening of Novemer 3, 1875, Nelson returned to his farm from Woodstock and went out to feed his hogs. A colt came running up and when Nelson attempted to drive it away, the colt turned and kicked him in the face. The impact smashed his jaw and killed him, instantly orphaning his six children. Both Nelson and his wife are buried in *Scandinavian Cemetery*.

Niels Sjurson Vike (Nelson S. Wicker), also aboard the Juno, first settled in Chicago but by 1844 moved up to Lake Superior where he earned $30 a month mining copper. After three years he returned to Chicago and with his earnings, had a big house built and fitted one room as a store. In 1848 he made plans to run a restaurant, as well as a grocery store. He also went to school to learn arithmetic and how to read and write English. In 1849 Nelson married Ann Thompson, who had emigrated with her parents from Voss Parish in 1844 and settled in Woodstock. In 1853 Nelson began buying land in McHenry County, including a

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large piece just northwest of the village of Woodstock in Dorr Township and the family farmed.

On August 13, 1862, at the age of 36, the Dorr Township farmer Nelson Wicker enlisted in the Union Army in Lockport, for a period of three years. He mustered in on August 28 in Chicago. Nelson served as a private in Company C of the 90th Illinois Infantry. He was engaged in the Battle at Mission Ridge in Tennessee on November 25, 1863, where the Union Army led by Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant fought the Confederate Army led by Gen. Braxton Bragg. During the battle, Private Wicker received a severe wound in his right shoulder. He was evacuated to the regimental hospital in Chattanooga, Tenn. where he was mustered out and died on November 29, 1863.

He became a man with two graves. Wicker has a gravestone at Chattanooga National Cemetery, where he was originally buried, as well as at the Scandinavian Cemetery in Greenwood Township. His farm was divided up into lots and sold over time as Wicker's Addition to Woodstock.

Twelve passengers of Juno's maiden voyage now rest in Scandinavian Cemetery in Greenwood Township; another in the Old Norwegian Cemetery which has since been lost to time.

Early 1960s - McHenry County Historical Society's first organizational meeting
From left, bottom row: Dorothy McEachren, president and G. Watson Lowe, vice president. Top row: Floyd Eckert, Robert Olson, and Henry F. Nell Jr., treasurer.

Volunteers are the Lifeblood of our Organization!

Volunteering in your community does a heart good. So, If you're looking to spend a few hours volunteering in the company of some wonderful, welcoming people, sharing laughs, making new friends, and doing some good, then we'd love to talk to you about where you can help. There's room at the Museum for everyone at any skill level.

Got Skills? Your time is as valuable as your treasure, so if you're a detailed person who loves to plan events/parties and are interested in helping plan our two signature 60th celebration events this coming year, please let Janet know.

Janet Barron is our Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator. Please visit <gothistory.org/volunteer> to learn more.

1981 - McHenry County Historical Society's Gannon Cabin Dedication - Union, Illinois Museum Campus
Left to right: MCHS Board President Shuji Kimura, State Rep. A.B. McConnell, Henry Marlowe, State Senator Dick Klemm, Robert Stoxen and Don Hildebrand, MCHS treasurer.

During this, our 2023 60th anniversary year, we'll be including photographs and articles in the Tracer to honor our own organizational history, including notable and dedicated board members, staff and our many volunteers. You'll likely also find stories about our wonderful members and loyal friends of local history!

How Did Queen Anne Prairie Get its Name?

BY KURT PEARSON

One story of how Queen Anne Prairie received its name stems from page 671 of the History of McHenry County, Illinois from 1885:

"Henry Weston who located in the township in 1833, is said to be the first settler. But little is known of him. He was an Englishman and came to Greenwood with his wife's sister, Miss Ann McQuinn, for whom Queen Anne Prairie was named, she being the first white woman who ever kept house in Greenwood Township. Shortly after Mr. Weston's arrival his wife joined them. She died a few years after coming here and was among the first buried in Greenwood Cemetery. Mr. Weston married Miss Watson soon after and this is said to be the first marriage that ever took place in the township." Immediately after the story, the authors refute the claim that Henry Weston's second marriage was the first in the township.

When the McHenry County Illinois Cemeteries Volume I: Northwest Townships, was published, its authors provided additional information and showed some skepticism of the validity of other parts of the story:

"Ann McGuinn is the most famous burial here [in Greenwood Cemetery]. She is said to have arrived in Greenwood in 1833 with brother-in-law, Henry Weston, to pave the way for her sister. If true, she would have been the first white woman in the county. Weston's wife (first name unknown) arrived around 1837 with her children John and Clarissa. She appears to have died around the time her youngest child Thomas was born in 1838. Her sister Ann died prior to 1840, but the exact date is unknown. Henry married the second wife, Elizabeth Watson, on July 2, 1840, [in McHenry County]. The newlyweds moved first to Winnebago County, then to Iowa where they farmed and raised a large brood of children. Ann gave her name, albeit with a different spelling, to the prairie on which she settled, yet little is known of her life. Being honored with the nickname "Queen Anne" would seem to indicate that she was the only female in the area. However, with both sisters dead and other family members gone from the county, there was no one left to authenticate the claim when the histories were written" (page ___, my italics).

This story requires further investigation. Obviously, records are difficult to come by in those early day. However, there should be land records if Henry purchased land. The only contemporary written proof found that Henry Weston lived in McHenry County is the marriage record of Henry and his second wife in 1840 and a possible appearance in the 1840 U. S. Census as "Henry Western" living somewhere in McHenry County alone. That fits with the story that his first wife had died and the census could have been taken before his July 1840 second marriage. However, what happened to the three children who appear

Continued on page 9

Continued from page 8

living with Henry and Elizabeth in subsequent censuses?

According to over 100 family trees which contain the Henry Weston family, they all agree that the first child, John H. Weston, was born on September 25, 1836, in New York State. Subsequent census records agree with that place and year. How did Henry Weston father a child in New York if he had been living in McHenry County since 1833? The story is beginning to fall apart.

There is also complete agreement that the second child, Clarissa Margaret Weston, was born on July 5, 1837, somewhere in Ohio. The family appears to be moving westward, but the arrival time in McHenry County is getting later and later. By now it seems doubtful that Henry Weston could have arrived in Greenwood any earlier than 1837 and still conceived children born in New York and Ohio. If Henry was not here before 1837, it is unlikely that Ann McGuinn arrived any earlier.

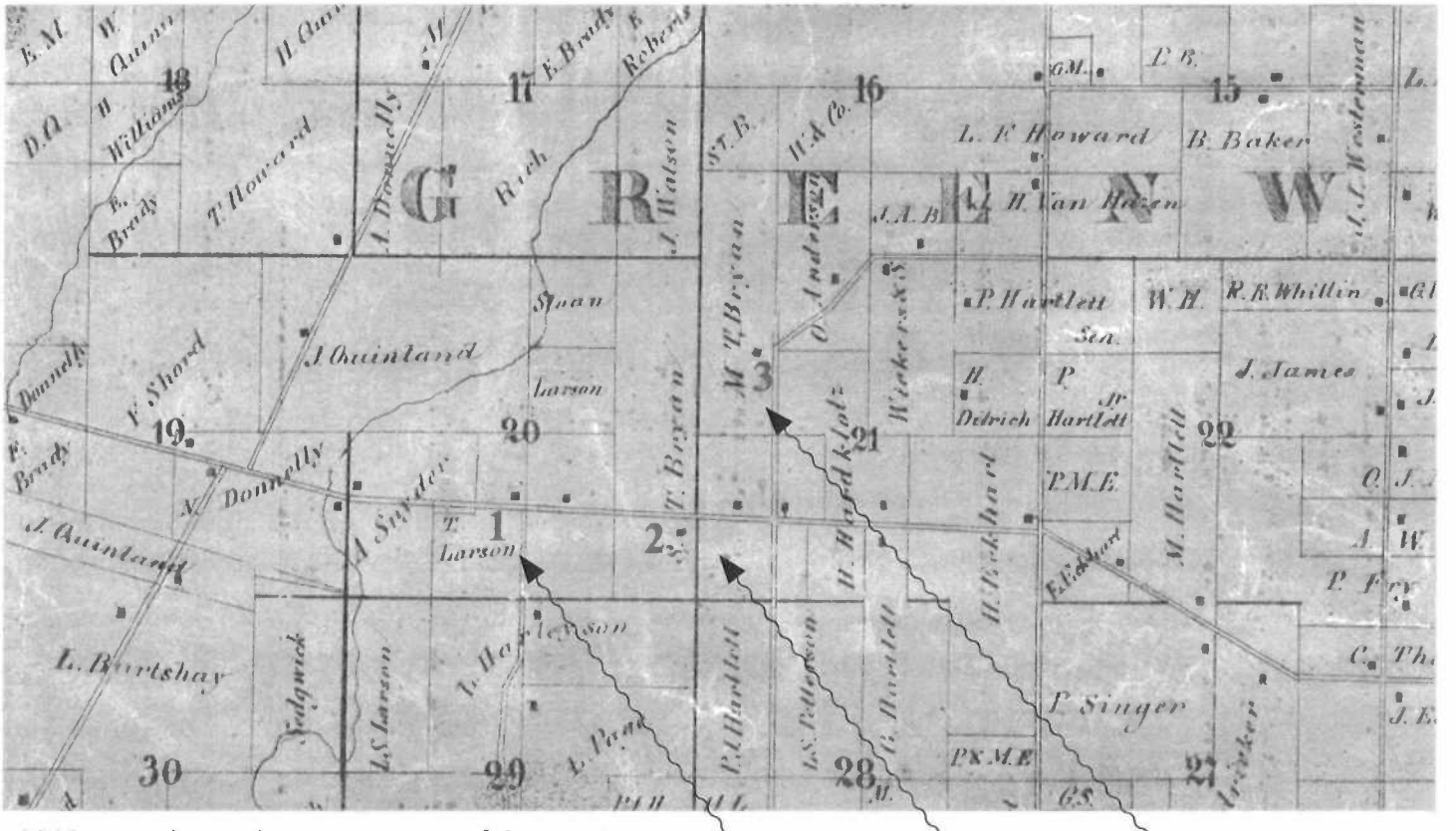
There is not agreement on the birth date and birth place of their third child, Thomas Weston. Records vary, perhaps because of the death of his mother. The date varies from 1838 to July 1839. The place varies between Illinois (some as specific as Clinton, Dewitt County) to Iowa (which is the place stated in Thomas's obituary).

The explanation of how this land in Greenwood Township could be named, or rather misnamed, "Queen Anne Prairie" for someone named "Ann" who does not appear to have owned land in the area and lived here no more than three years before her death seems implausible. Ann's earliest possible arrival in 1837 also seems late to win the title of the first white woman to keep house in Greenwood Township.

It is dangerous to go back in time and re-write history with little evidence, but a simpler explanation is available from a surprising source much earlier than the 1885 history. It requires some preliminary information.

The most important Norwegian settlement in America was Koshkonong, Wisconsin, named after the adjacent river by English settlers trying to transcribe what they heard from Native Americans, possibly Winnebago or Potawatomi, which was Gishkzhegonang (Catfish Place). An 1815 map calls the river Qoshqonong. This Norwegian settlement was founded in 1837 by people who call themselves Vossings, people from Voss, Norway. In letters home they inspired others to come to Koshkonong and the settlement grew.

Another Norwegian settlement was formed in McHenry County's Greenwood Township. A large group of people, hearing of the area from a few people from Voss parish, followed the encouragement in letters sent home, emigrated from Voss and they began settling this area in earnest in the early to mid-1840s. The Norwegians began purchasing land in the center of the township, specifically Sections 20 and 21. A Norwegian church was built (1850) and a Norwegian Cemetery started in Section 21.



1862 map above shows a portion of Queen Anne Prairie in Greenwood Township. Names of three people mentioned as living on "Quinong Prairie" by Erik Knutson in the first Vossing Society newsletter from 1848 are indicated here with arrows.

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

The first Vossing Society in America was established in Chicago in 1848. Its first newsletter, which gave news about people in America who came from Voss, was completed December 1, 1848, and in that letter was news of Vossings from Chicago and another place called "Quinong Prairie":

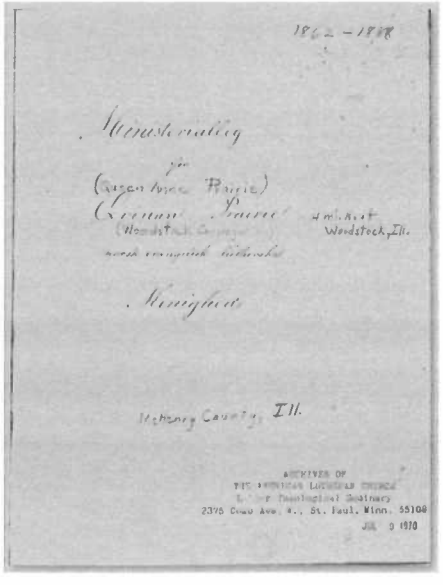
"Erik Knutson Saue...der bor paa Quinong Prairie har nylig været her"

Translated: "Erik Knutson Saue who lives on Quinong Prairie has just been here [in Chicago]"

In the story Erik Knutson, who emigrated in 1845 and lived in Section 20 of Greenwood Township, gave news of five other farmers originally from Voss – Niels Tollefsen Bryn (em. 1843), Tollef Larsen Dømbe (em. 1844), Steffen Tollefsen Bryn (em. 1843), Knut Tungeteig, and Mikkel Tollefsen Bryn (em. 1843) – who all now lived on "Quinong Prairie." Five of these six people are buried in Scandinavian Cemetery on Queen Anne Prairie.

At first, I wondered if the Norwegians were trying to make sense of what they heard and spelled Queen Anne Prairie as best they could: "Quinong Prairie." However, they spelled the difficult Koshkonong settlement correctly, exactly as it is spelled today, exactly as earlier English settlers spelled it. My theory now is the Norwegians spelled Quinong Prairie correctly, exactly as the first settlers of Greenwood Township, whoever they were, spelled the name. According to this Vossing newsletter, in 1848, well after Henry Weston and family had moved away, this area in Greenwood Township was known as Quinong Prairie.

My additional thought is that the name originated from the Potawatomi language named perhaps for a creek that wound its way through the western portion of Greenwood Township. The name sounds a lot like "Queen Anne" and thus when it was written down in later years, the name became more Europeanized and a story was created to try to explain how this prairie received the name Queen Anne.


1862 - 1878

Woodstock, Ill.

McHenry County, Ill.

ARCHIVES OF THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH 2375 Como Ave. W., St. Paul, Minn. 55108 JUL 9 1970

A final document of support for this theory, over two decades before the 1885 history, comes from the earliest extant records of the Norwegian church in Section 20 of Greenwood Township whose minister could speak both Norwegian and English. On the title page of his ministerial book, he called the parish in 1862 "Quinan Prairie Norsk Evangelisk Lutherske Menighed": Quinan Prairie Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation.

2023 Events & Programs

5/2	MUSEUM OPENS TO PUBLIC
5/20	MT. TABOR CEMETARY WALK
6/2	60TH ANNIVERSARY MUSEUM OPENING PARTY
6/3	OAKLAND CEMETARY WALK
7/9	ANNUAL HERITAGE FAIR
10/1	ANNUAL CIDER FEST
10/13 - 15	AUTUMN DRIVE Perkins Hall 3600 Franklinville Rd, Woodstock
11/10	60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AND QUILT RAFFLE DRAWING
12/3	HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

Mark Your Calendars

Our initial 2023 program schedule is shown above.

Our Sampler lecture series, which traditionally takes place in March and April, is being reimagined later this year - including satellite locations.

The latest dates and topics will be posted on our website and delivered to members via our monthly E-newsletter. We encourage you to sign up using our new Neon interface. You'll find quick access tabs for Neon features on our evolving website's home page.

At left: John Roach, director of the state beverage and cigarette tax division, using a sledge hammer to smash illegal slot machines in 1948

Courtesy Wisconsin Historical Society

Above: Vintage slot machine, Casino Legends Hall of Fame at the Tropicana Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada (from the Library of Congress)

Be it a "gambling terminal" or slot machine, what once was illegal now is in play and rolling in the green

By ED URBAN

According to the Illinois Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability, the state collected about $1.9 billion in total gaming revenues during fiscal 2022. The single largest gaming revenue source was the Lottery ($833 million), slightly better than 44 percent of the total. However, video gaming was a close second.

The number of video gaming terminals in operation across Illinois increased to more than 43,000 by the end of fiscal 2022. That demand helped generate $23.1 million in tax revenue for Illinois and another $4 million for McHenry County, according to the Illinois Gaming Board.

Gaming examples are seen everywhere – bright neon signs and large red flags shouting; "Video Poker, Video Gaming," Video Slots," and "Play Here!" In the old days, these tempters were referred to as "one-armed bandits." But the modern version has no arm – just buttons.

We've survived this invasion before and I'm sure that we'll survive this one.

The predecessor to the modern slot machine was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1891. Within two years it had spread nationwide. The symbols displayed on these early machines were playing cards; the gambler was paid on the strength of his five-card hand. The machines didn't automatically payout, but the card combinations corresponded to a prize.

An array of gaming machines from the early 20th century.

Photo by Sherry L. Howard: myauctionfinds.com (used here with permission)

Charles Fey, a mechanic from San Francisco, is credited with inventing the first slot machine. He took interest in the poker machines and designed the first that automatically paid out on a three-card poker hand. In 1895 he retooled this invention to a three-reel version, and he replaced the card faces with symbols. The combination that paid out the top prize of 20 coins was three bells. This machine was called the Liberty Bell.

The first record that I was able to locate that mentioned slot machines in Marengo appeared in the Nov. 8, 1901, edition of the Marengo Republican News. It announced; "There are three penny-in-the-slot machines on the west side of State Street where salted roasted peanuts can be had. They catch many pennies."

The machines mentioned in this brief announcement were called trade stimulators and allowed customers to participate in a game of chance – in this case the prize was roasted peanuts. Trade stimulators were looked upon with disdain because they were designed to bolster a merchant's bottom line. By offering food or tobacco prizes store operators were able to get around established gambling statutes. In some cases trade stimulators were designed to be attractive to children.

Based on the lack of local newspaper articles pertaining to slot machines in Marengo, it seems that they were not a problem during the 1920s ... at least as far as the public was concerned. The same can't be said for the remainder of McHenry County, as there were several mentions of raids and seizures related to slot machines throughout the county.

It wasn't until Dec. 24, 1932, when an issue with slot machines surfaced. On that day McHenry County Sheriff's Department Chief Deputy Harold Reese and his men raided five Marengo establishments. Slot machines were seized at the Green Lantern, Hi-Way Café, White Café, Piske Restaurant, and The Hole.

Continued on page 12

Continued from page 11

It seems that things remained quiet for the next several years, and in 1936 an active crusade was led against the one-armed-bandit by the Marengo Republican News. The Illinois Attorney General had previously declared that all slot machines were illegal – even the devices that dispensed food items. Finally, on Dec. 27, 1937, Marengo Mayor W.L. Miller and Police Chief Fred Nelson visited each business that formerly maintained a slot machine and confirmed that they were all removed.

But, the one-armed bandits didn't die peacefully. There was a seething tension still smoldering in the community over the drawn-out fight, and it finally erupted at a city council meeting on Jan. 4, 1938. Mayor Miller accused the Marengo Republican News of "knifing in the back..." the city council. The following week the newspaper published a scathing editorial directed at the mayor.

On the county level the fight against gambling devices was led by Woodstock attorney and McHenry County Judge Charles P. Barnes. In the Feb. 10, 1938, issue of the Marengo Republican News Barnes published a letter labeled as a paid advertisement. In it he claimed that "slot machines and gambling devices have boldly run wide open, day and night in our county, with the full knowledge and without the slightest interference from either of our two sheriffs. ..."

Barnes continued: "There have been rumors for many years that large sums of money were being paid for the privilege of running and operating slot machines in this county, and to put it perfectly plain, many argue that the rumors must have been true, or the machines would never have been allowed to run."

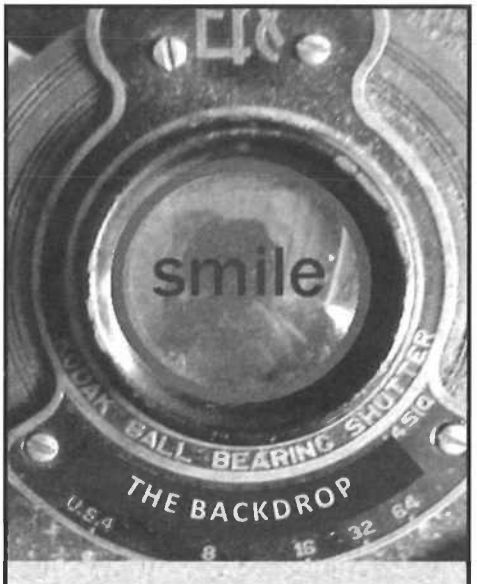
In Marengo the saga finally came to an end on Feb. 18, 1938, during a special city council meeting when gambling devices were made illegal in town. The illegal slot machine never was eradicated completely from McHenry County. Stories of illegal possession sporadically appeared in local news during the next six decades.

The slot machine lost many battles in its long fight to survive, but it finally won the war in July 2009 when the Illinois Legislature passed the Video Gaming Act.

A slot machine in our museum's collection. We're preserving other historic McHenry County gaming-related artifacts.

Coming: A BIG Year for History

Our museum opened **July 4th, 1976** to much fanfare. During those early years, before vast information was available on personal computers and smartphones (there was no 'online' yet), large numbers of people attended our lectures. Many of our earliest board members reached out to those in their own community for artifact donations and also presented slide shows, very proud of their local heritage.



the backdrop
106 Cass Street
Woodstock, IL
815•338•3007

2026 will mark the **250th anniversary** of America's founding. To observe this occasion, **America250.org** is encouraging Americans to remember our past, celebrate the present, and look forward to a promising future for all.

It'll also be our museum's **50th.** For us, it will be a **BIG** year.

☞ Stay tuned!

Gala ceremony - Grand opening of the MCHS Museum July, 4th 1976, Union, Illinois

Facts to share: How your support helps MCHS preserve local history

We're celebrating our Society's 60th anniversary in 2023, so we're gathering ideas and planning ways to share all we do for McHenry County citizens in preserving and honoring our rich local history.

H istory Education Advocates for Local Schools

E xperts in History Research and Preservation

L ocal History Museum and Program Center for All Ages

P rimary Heritage Library and Archive for McHenry County

R esource Partners With All Local History Groups

Our 'H E L P R' mnemonic enables memory of our five key points of pride and service

- In 2023, as we celebrate our founding 60 years ago, the McHenry County Historical Society and its members have a proud track record, rich in preservation, education, and entertainment contributions to McHenry County.

- We spearheaded efforts to develop a McHenry County Historic Preservation Ordinance in 1990. Most larger municipalities followed our lead in similar ways.

- We restored & continue to preserve the 1843 Gannon log cabin, 1867 Pringle School, 1886 Seneca Town Hall, 1895 West Harmony School, 1898 Riley Methodist Church & 1950s Modern Tourist Cabin (reconstructed inside your museum!)

- Your almost-full city block museum campus in Union includes the 1870 native limestone Union School. We encourage you to visit often to discover what's new.

- Without any use of tax dollars, we continue to collect and preserve three-dimensional artifacts of local human progress. We are also bringing online collection access to our patrons in innovative ways.

- Our educational programs foster thinking which helps connect the realities of today with insightful perspective on the continuous flow of history.

- Our Historic Sites committee has identified and provided commemorative plaques in 92 notable locations throughout our county.

- We honor and assist local organizations and businesses with preservation of their unique historic legacies.

- Your museum provides a family-oriented entertainment and educational destination, uniquely and interactively telling the ongoing story of McHenry County and its people.

- As a resource for local history information, we field and respond to many daily requests on preservation, properties, notable citizens, family history, business history, historic images and object conservation.

- Your research library (free to members) houses thousands of technical books and pamphlets; photographs; postcards; maps; journals; business, club, school and governmental records; local history books; biographical files; scrapbooks; newspapers; phone directories; high school yearbooks and knowledgeable people with answers to all sorts of questions. We've celebrated our 40th anniversary of library service. Visit <mchenrycountyhistory.org/research-library> to learn much more!

- We create learning experiences and events. We participate in the activities of like-minded organizations throughout McHenry County.

- We have fun while teaching, learning, and experiencing history together - our outreach to young families continues.

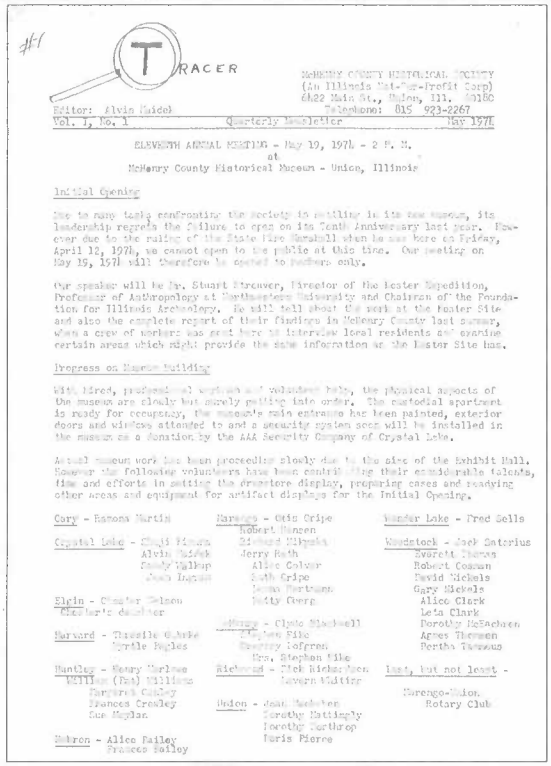
- Preserving community history provides multi-sensory collective memory. Ultimately, our goal is to encourage the appreciation of all aspects of our environment, both natural and manmade. Appreciation of history will most definitely enrich your family's lives and experiences.

- Those individuals who are sensitive to their environment make better citizens. Better citizens vote, they participate in community life and they teach their children by example.

- Members, volunteers and friends of the McHenry County Historical Society are amazing people. Invite others to join our continuing quest to preserve and share local history.

Tracer History Page

We've published literally hundreds of Tracer issues since our first (below) in 1974. They're loaded with news from our organization and rich with wonderful local history stories about McHenry County. In each new Tracer, starting here, we'll provide a glimpse into our past with highlights from earlier issues.



#1

TRACER

McHENRY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
(An Illinois Not-For-Profit Corp)
6422 Main St., Union, Ill. 60180
Telephone: 815 923-2267

Editor: Alvin Haidek
Vol. I, No. 1 Quarterly Newsletter May 1974

ELEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING - May 19, 1974 - 2 P. M.
at
McHenry County Historical Museum - Union, Illinois

Initial Opening

Due to many tasks confronting the society in settling in its new museum, its leadership regrets the failure to open on its Tenth Anniversary last year. However due to the ruling of the State Fire Marshall when he was here on Friday, April 12, 1974, we cannot open to the public at this time. Our meeting on May 19, 1974 will therefore be opened to members only.

Our speaker will be Dr. Stuart Streuver, Director of the Koster Expedition, Professor of Anthropology at Northwestern University and Chairman of the Foundation for Illinois Archeology. He will tell about the work at the Koster Site and also the complete report of their findings in McHenry County last summer, when a crew of workers was sent here to interview local residents and examine certain areas which might provide the same information as the Koster Site has.

Progress on Museum Building

With hired, professional workman and volunteer help, the physical aspects of the museum are slowly but surely getting into order. The custodial apartment is ready for occupancy, the museum's main entrance has been painted, exterior doors and windows attended to and a security system soon will be installed in the museum as a donation by the AAA Security Company of Crystal Lake.

Actual museum work has been proceeding slowly due to the size of the Exhibit Hall. However the following volunteers have been contributing their considerable talents, time and efforts in setting the drugstore display, preparing cases and readying other areas and equipment for artifact displays for the Initial Opening.

Cary - Ramona Martin

Crystal Lake - Shuji Kimura, Alvin Haidek, Sandy Walkup, Joan Ingram

Elgin - Chester Nelson, Chester's daughter

Harvard - Thressile Guhrke, Myrtle Pagles

Huntley - Henry Marlowe, William (Pat) Williams, Margaret Conley, Frances Crowley, Sue Moylan

Hebron - Alice Bailey, Frances Bailey

Marengo - Otis Cripe, Robert Hansen, Richard Mikyska, Jerry Rath, Alice Colver, Ruth Cripe, Leona Hartmann, Betty Oberg

McHenry - Clyde Blackwell, Stephen Fike, Gregory Lofgren, Mrs. Stephen Fike

Richmond - Dick Richardson, Lavern Whiting

Union - Joan Mackeben, Dorothy Mattingly, Dorothy Northrop, Doris Pierce

Wonder Lake - Fred Sells

Woodstock - Jack Satorius, Everett Thomas, Robert Cosman, David Nickels, Gary Nickels, Alice Clark, Leta Clark, Dorothy McEachren, Agnes Thomsen, Bertha Tammeus

Last, but not least - Marengo-Union Rotary Club

On the left is a scan of the cover of Vol.I, No. 1, from May, 1974.

It had only four pages, typed by hand (there were no small desktop computers yet). 500 copies were printed for $7.48 on a Marengo High School duplicating machine. That's about a penny and a half each.

On the right is the same page, after scanning & applying OCR, to digitally read it for editing. It was cleaned up for this easier-to-read look.

Below, you'll find notable clips from last 3 pages of issue #1.

Let us know what you think. We have back issues available, & are looking for scanning & indexing help with our new Tracer History Page project.

Please contact:
don@mchenrycountyhistory.org

(More from issue # 1):
in notable reference to our earliest volunteers at bottom of pg 1

You can see which areas of our county are represented, but we could use many more volunteers, even if only for a couple of hours at a time.

Membership Dues and Donations

Your continued support is appreciated. We are approaching the beginning of another membership year. If possible, please send check for dues prior to the Annual Meeting, to the museum . This will, avoid confusion at the door of the Exhibit Hall. Individual - $2.00; Family - $5.00; Businesses - $15.00; Life memberships, paid at one time - $100.00.

We hope that both public and civic organizations will include the McHenry County Historical Society in their budgets yearly, so that renovation of the second floor of the museum can be started as soon as the first floor is completed.

Maintenance, light, water, heat and telephone should be paid entirely from income from dues. Ask your relatives, friends and neighbors to join THEIR historical society. Continuing financial support will go to complete three exhibit rooms on second floor, outside shutters over closed windows, new roof, 2 fire escapes, gutters, etc., and pay interest on loans from banks and savings and loans, all of which must be repaid in full within three more years.

Volunteer Cadre

Volunteers needed: No pay involved but the satisfaction that you are doing something to preserve the past as well as meeting new associates in what is called "life." The following project areas are in need of help:

1 - Clean typewriters. 2 - Help accession (catalog). 3 - Repair book bindings. 4 - Mend maps and papers. 5 - Write short historical sketches on people, buildings, cemeteries and landmarks. 6 - Typing. 7 - Mannequin "touch-ups." 8 - Carpentry, painting and small repairs assistance. 9 - Geneology research: Scan 1840-1850-1860 census, recording on family records for families listed. 10 - Person or persons to plan and operate an affair such as a "harvest day","festival day" or "history-making day," etc.

11 - Person or persons to conduct craft classes on candle making, rug weaving, spinning and cider making.

Aquisitions – Recent

Vacuum cleaner, circa 1880. A two-wheeled, "one-boiler" contraption, not guaranteed to work but to please the sight and intellect. Donor: R. C. Richardson, Richmond.

Civil War Flag carried in the Civil War by Roy Spencer, uncle of Helen Spencer Anthony and son of Calvin Spencer (founder of Marengo) presented to Kelley Bros. by Miss Sofronia Spencer. Donor: Mrs. Francis (Stanford) Muzzy, Marengo.

Cream Separator and Tin Canning supplies. Donors: Mr. & Mrs. Clinton Martin,McHenry.

Picture of George Washington hung on wall of Haligus School in 1910. Donors: Mr. & Mrs. William Davis, Huntley.

Hoover Vacuum - Model 300. Used in woodworking shop in Woodstock by George Frozley. Donor: Mrs. George Frozley.

Buck Saw used by George Frozley in his woodworking shop. Donor: Joseph Frozley, Woodstock.

Oliver Typewriter 10 Year Gold Pin presented to Charles Schmidt in 1912, father of donor: Harold Schmidt, Woodstock.

We cannot list all artifacts that have been donated recently due to lack of space. Future issues will mention others.

Donations are Tax Deductible

All donations to the historical society, financial or artifacts, are deductible for the year donated. Any questions concerning value of artifacts should be directed to the local office of the Internal Revenue Service in Woodstock.

To the Membership

In renovating the museum it was found necessary to remove all sinks and toilets and install ones approved by the State Fire Marshall. We have 8 sinks, cast iron-porcelain; 5 toilets; 1 urinal. Anyone interested in securing these please call the museum.

Mimeograph needed

If by chance your business, or anyone you know, has a mimeograph to replace, the society would appreciate the donation of the old one. Of course, we would accept a new one, which would also be appreciated. Tax deductible.

Addressograph needed

Our membership is increasing and we surely could use an addressograph to lighten our work load. Now that we are planning to mail a quarterly newsletter to our members, we could use one to advantage. We have the part to make the metal address plate, but not the machine that addresses the envelopes.

Typewriters needed

We have cards and reports that need to be typed every week. These are records we do not like to leave the files in the museum. Our Membership Secretary and volunteer typists could do this work in the museum office and valuable information would not need to be taken to their homes to complete.

Tracings to be Conducted

Woodstock City Park Fountain. Whereabouts of the city's cast iron fountain is sought. Rumor has it in someone's back yard. It was probably-taken dawn prior to the erection of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument.

Edison Phonograph. Does anyone have or know where to find an Edison Phonograph with horn and cylinder discs? If so, call museum.

Cameras. Old cameras are sought this month. Look in those attics, contact grandparents on this and then contact "you know who."

Set of Tools for use in Renovating Museum. New or used. We have many volunteers to repair donated artifacts and they must bring their own toolcase with them. Some come from quite a distance and it would be convenient to have a set on hand for use of all who are helping with the repair work. Again contact "you know who."

Custodian or Custodians needed for Museum Apartment. We have the apartment ready. A custodian and wife could move in any time. If you know anyone interested, have them call and make an appointment for an interview.

We will be looking for you at the Annual Meeting on May 19, 1974 at 2 P. M. at the museum in Union. You will see the LARGE NEW SIGN in front which was made by the Parkway Signs, Nest Route 120, McHenry, and donated by the Marengo-Union Rotary Club.

Old Mystery Photo

In the heyday of the Chain O' Lakes, Pistakee Bay and the Fox River resort scene, the Riverside House in McHenry was at its epicenter. Historical records indicate that John Wire Smith and his nephew, David S. Smith, were responsible for the construction of the Riverside House in 1864. It was located on the former site of Benjamin B. Brown's "Log Cabin Tavern." The Smiths used bricks produced a few miles south on the river and lumber from Waukegan.

David became the hotel's first manager.

The three-story brick building, located at the corner of Route 120 and Riverside Drive, included a 40-by-80-foot ballroom on third floor with 13 ½-foot-tall ceilings and a similar-sized storeroom which the next owner – John I. Story – converted into a dining room. During its heyday, its said the dining room served up to 400 people a day – most from Chicago.

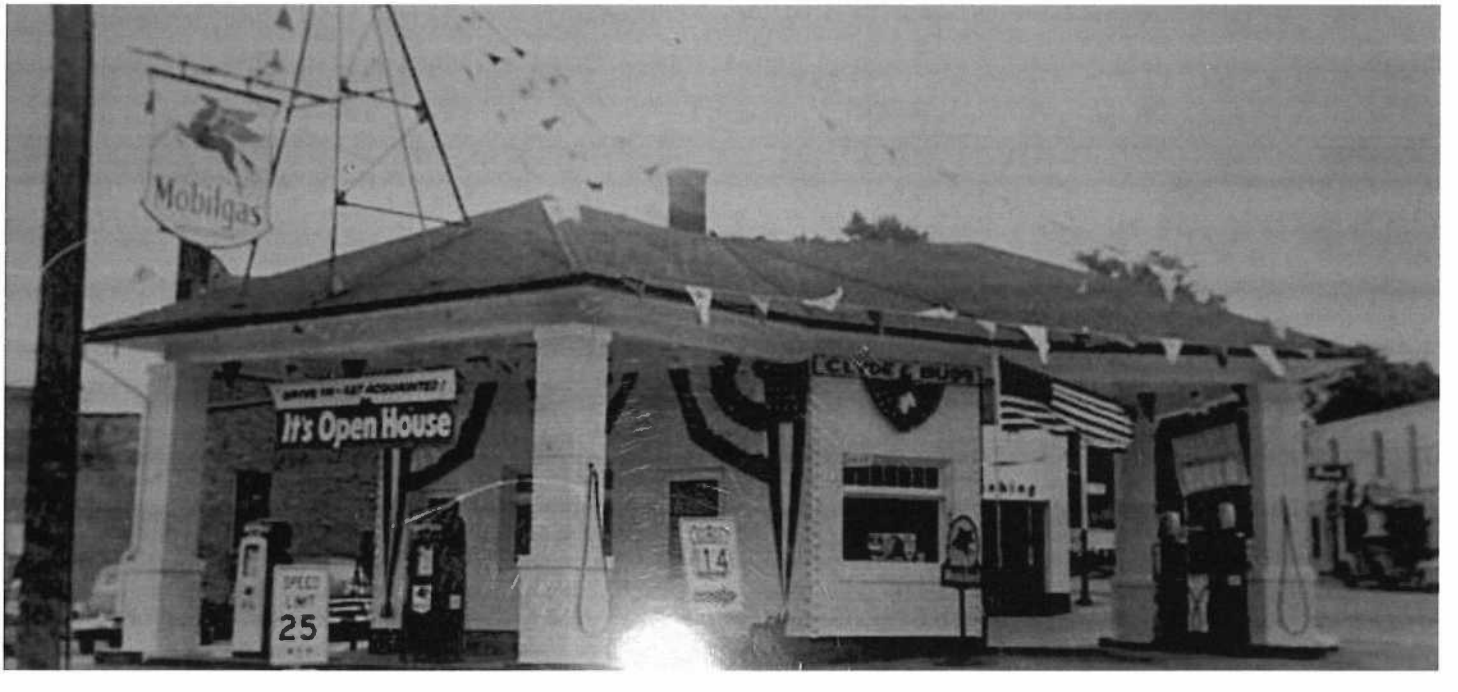
Frank O. and Ella Gans bought the hotel in 1911, the same year the Riverside received electricity. Gans later converted the third floor into 12 more hotel rooms, adding to the 24 rooms already on the second floor. Rooms could be rented by the day or week. Daily rates were $2 (single), $2.50 (double). Weekly rates were $10 and $12, respectively.

Jay and Judy Bomberg, Highland Park transplants, later bought the building from Dick and Carol Buchert – with the help of the Community Investment Corp. of Chicago. Jay, a retired hospital administrator and former housing commissioner in Highland Park, immediately set about making exterior repairs.

Ed O'Brien of Harvard correctly – and quickly – recognized the Riverside House as summer's mystery photo. As a local historian, it's pretty hard to pull one over on Ed. But having answered two of the recent mystery photos correctly, he has thrown down the gauntlet. Good luck with the next one!

New Mystery Photo

Can you guess in which town this gas station in this 1949 picture was located? (There is a clue.) Extra credit if you can identify the intersection and name the station.



Tracer

A Membership Benefit since May, 1974

Not-For-Profit
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published by the **McHenry County Historical Society & Museum**

An Illinois Not-for-profit Corporation

6422 Main Street, P.O. Box 434, Union, Illinois 60180

815-923-2267 Email: info@mchenrycountyhistory.org

Slot Machine Story

See page 11

New in the Library...

- Prairie Ridge High School 1982 yearbook, Crystal Lake, IL
- Chronological Career Summary: Austin J. (Jim) Bailey, Jr., January 2008
- Sidwell Studio official tax maps of McHenry County, (2 volumes), Sidwell Co., West Chicago, IL, 1995
- Johnsburg High School, IL Grandma's Treasures on Parade, 1982
- History of the Barbers of Javan, New York" by Gary E. Swinson, Torrence, CA Circa 1992
- Illinois Historic Structures Survey – Inventory of Historic Structures in McHenry County, interim report, October 1972
- Poems by Maud B. Curr, Circa 1931
- McHenry State Bank's "Recipes to Bank On," 1989
- Fight! By David H. Colcord, Gorr Press, Circa 1934
- Malvina Smith by Dave Colcord, Yourself Magazine, Marengo, IL Circa 1951
- Stardust on the Lushbaugh by Dave Colcord, Yourself Magazine, Marengo, IL Circa 1948
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